10. The necessity for stopping the further sale of tank-beds in the Eraniel taluk.

Mr. P. N. Daniel (Member, Eraniel taluk) said that the sale of irrigation tank-beds in South Travancore was an old subject on which a great deal had been said on previous occasions. The question was an important one and required careful and sympathetic consideration at the hands of the Government. The Member said that the cultivation of paddy was the most important and the biggest industry in South Travancore, and at the same time, it was the most precarious one among all industries. The ryot who cultivated paddy, notwithstanding his best efforts, had to depend upon many external circumstances, and, among them, water occupied the most, important place. Usually, there would be a shower or two in the middle of Medom, and, with it, the ryot would begin his cultivation. The monsoon generally set in about the middle of Edavom. Any delay in getting water on the two occasions, either in the shape of rain or from tanks or reservoirs, would greatly upset the ryot and alarm him. The question was therefore how to get in, store and preserve every possible drop of water, and that accounted for the origin of the numerous tanks. Even with the Kodayar Reservoir, the people were as badly off as before for water during the dry months of the year. There were many tanks which the people had made in their own lands at their cost. Those tanks were first free from any tax, they were then treated as *porambokes*, and, finally, they were considered as lands which the Government had a right to dispose of as they chose. The Member said that that was a source of great discouragement to private enterprise and he requested that the ryots should be encouraged in the matter of making tanks and maintaining them. The Member stated also that, while the Pechipara Dam was still under construction, it was thought that the Reservoir, when completed, could hold a quantity of water sufficient to irrigate all the then existing paddy lands as well as the new lands estimated to be brought under wet cultivation, even if there were no rains continuously for a couple of years. It was doubtful whether that statement could now be made even for a single rainless year. The Kodayar Project had not yet passed the *experimental* stage and the sale of tanks at such a time would therefore be premature. The Member also pointed out that, in South Travancore, the wet lands were mostly on the steeply-descending slopes of numerous hills, and, as such, if the sluices or the feeding channels were increased in number, the ryot would be on the safer side, but the scope for waste of water would be great. If, on the other hand, the sluices were reduced in number, the wastage of water would be less, but the ryot's position would be more precarious. If there were tanks in convenient places, all those evils could be prevented. The tanks in South Travancore thus served many useful and necessary purposes, so much so that none of them could be said to be *unnecessary*. If they could be made to retain water throughout the year, that was a condition much to be desired. The Member therefore prayed that the further sale of tank-beds might be stopped, until it was finally proved that irrigating the fields, even in rainless years, directly from the channel without the help of tanks, was really successful.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

11. The desirability of partitioning the Chengannur taluk into two, with Pathanamthitta as the head-quarters of the new taluk.

Mr. Koshi Thomas (Member, Chengannur taluk) pointed out that, of all the taluks in the State, Chengannur was the largest in point of area. The Tahsildar had Magisterial duties in 10 *pakuthies*, besides heavy Revenue and Devaswom work. In the taluk, the *puthuval*, *poramboke* and other revenue cases were abnormally heavy for one officer. The Tahsildar had also to go to the Sabarimala hills to conduct the Makaravilakku ceremony in the Sastha temple there at a time when the Utsavam would have commenced in the Chengannur temple. His presence was required in both places. Further, on the ground of distance, the supervision of the Achankoil Sastha temple, which was situated in the Kumbazha *pakuthi* of the Chengannur taluk, had been transferred to the Shencotta Tahsildar In that temple, Malayala *acharas* prevailed, but the temple had to be tacked on to a Tamil-speaking taluk, as the Chengannur taluk was far too extensive for any one officer to keep a tight grip over it. The temple required therefore to be retransferred to the Chengannur taluk.

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